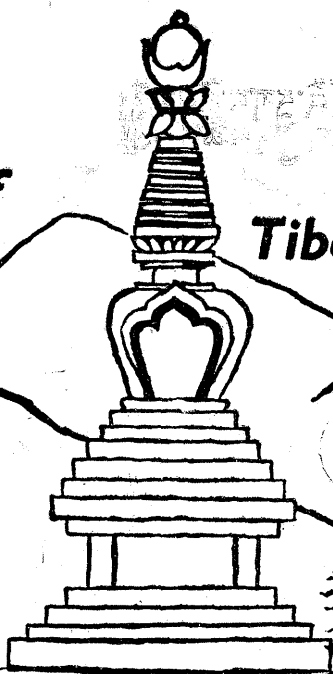


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## Vyañjanabhakti, AND IRREGULARITIES IN THE TIBETAN VERB

R.K. SPRIGG

The term *svarabhakti* is familiar to Sanskrit scholars, and to students of linguistics in general, as a means of accounting for a 'vowel fragment' or vowel glide, a feature of the transition, in Sanskrit, from *r*, and sometimes also *l*, to another consonant, commonly a fricative (or spirant) consonant;<sup>1</sup> following in the footsteps of 'the earliest phoneticians' I wish to introduce the complementary term *vyañjanabhakti* to account for a *consonant* fragment, or *consonant* glide, as a feature of the transition from a liquid consonant to another consonant, commonly a fricative (or spirant) consonant.

Though it is in origin a Sanskrit phonological term, *svarabhakti* has been applied to comparable phenomena in other languages, as, for example, in the following passage from a grammar of Scots Gaelic: 'THE PARASITIC OR (IN SANSKRIT) THE SVARABHAKTI VOWEL (i.e. The "voice-attachment", "vowel portion", or glide vowel).

*Svarabhakti* is the development in the spoken language of a non-radical or inorganic vowel from the voiced sound of the preceding consonant, resulting in a repetition of the preceding vowel.

*Tulach gorm* m. *Green hill*, is in Scottish C.S. (Common Speech) spoken and written as *Tullochgorum* (more correctly *Tullochgorom*)<sup>2</sup>.

A close parallel to the Scots-Gaelic pronunciation of *gorm* 'green' as though it were 'gorum' or 'gorom' is provided by the well-known cry of the *cá-válá* in Hindi '*cá---garm---garm cá*', in which *garm* will in all probability, at least in its first occurrence in this small quotation, be pronounced with a *svarabhakti*, as though it were '*garam*', with two syllables to the ear though only one appears to the eye; for the *svarabhakti* here has not achieved recognition in Hindi spelling.

For *vyañjanabhakti*, on the other hand, English readily provides examples in pronunciation, and, unlike my Hindi examples, even admits them into the spelling. Thus, where some speakers (including myself) pronounce *Hampton* and *Hampstead* with a sequence of two medial consonant sounds [-mt-] and [-ms-] respectively, others pronounce them with a sequence of three consonants, [-mpt-] and [-mps-], the [-p-] being *vyañjanabhakti*, sharing the labial feature with the [-m-] but the voicelessness

feature with the [-t-] or [-s-].<sup>3</sup> Etymology favours the former type of speaker, and requires such spellings as \*Hamton and \*Hamstead, compounded from Old English *hām* 'dwelling' (cf. *home*) with Old English *tūn*, 'enclosure', 'farm', 'town', and Old English *stede* 'place,' but the latter type of speaker has triumphed over the etymology, for the established spelling has clearly given orthographic status to the *vyañjanabhakti* [-p-]. In this paper I shall suggest that in Tibetan too *vyañjanabhakti* has triumphed, and that the incorporation of a *vyañjanabhakti* into the spelling of certain Tibetan verb forms has introduced an unnecessary air of irregularity into their paradigms.

Alternation in the spelling of the initial consonants of a considerable number of Tibetan verbs, especially between the present form and the past form, has long been something of a puzzle, and, probably, also something of an irritant, to students of Tibetan: 'Verb roots remain constant in most Sino-Tibetan languages. But --- diversity of form reaches the extreme in Old Bodish (classical Tibetan), where no positional phoneme of the verb is necessarily constant---whether consonantal prefix, consonantal initial, medial vowel, "final" consonant, or "suffixed" consonant.'<sup>4</sup> Shafer takes up this challenge by attempting to provide both the comparative grammarian and 'the beginning student in Old Bodish' with 'something like "conjugations" instead of the apparently endless confusion of verbal forms with which he is confronted in most of the dictionaries and grammars of the language', in the course of which he refers to an alternation of 'affricate initials in the present and corresponding sibilant initials in the perfect---: 'tshar, śar 'rise'; 'tshi, śi "die"; 'tshor, śor "escape"; 'dzig, žig "be ruined"; 'dzug, žugs, im. žugs "go in"; 'tsho, sos, im. sos "live"; 'dzad, zad "be on the decline"; and probably 'dzer, zer "say".'<sup>5</sup> It is verbs of this type, in which affricate initials alternate with fricative initials (Shafer's 'sibilant initials',) that I wish to analyse in terms of *vyañjanabhakti*; indeed, I have already made a beginning elsewhere, though without using the term *vyañjanabhakti*, taking as my examples the following four verbs, the upper line comprising the present forms, and the lower line the perfect forms, of the same four verbs, except that according to Jäschke, *zug* is also an alternative present form:<sup>6</sup>

'dzag drip	'dzig destroy	'dzugs plant	'dzug enter
(g)zags	bzig	zug	žugs. <sup>7</sup>

In the article in which I gave these examples limitations of time and space prevented me from illustrating *vyañjanabhakti* in Tibetan with more examples than those four, which exemplify only the following two out of a total of five types:

a. 'dz- alternating with (g/b)z- ၎ေ-, (ဂ/ဃ)ဒ-

b. 'dz- ,, ,, (b)z- ၎ေ-, (ဃ)ဒ-;

the three additional types that I need to recognize are:

c. 'tsh- alternating with (b)/gs- ၎ေ-, (ဃ)/ဂဃ-

d. 'tsh- ,, ,, (b)s- ၎ေ-, (ဃ)ဂ-

e. 'dr- ,, ,, r- ၎ေ-, ဒ-

a. 'dz- alternating with z-, gz-, and bz-

၎ေ- ,, ,, ဒ-, ဂဒ-, and ဃဒ-

In Jäschke's *Dictionary* I find nine verbs in which a present form in the initial two - letter group, 'dz- ၎ေ- alternates with other forms, past, future, and imperative, in which the initial either is the single letter z- ဒ- or contains the letter z in the groups gz- and bz- (ဂဒ-, ဃဒ-); e.g.

- i. present: 'dzag ၎ေဂ drip  
other: (g)zags, gzag (ဂ)ဒဂဃ, ဂဒဂ
- ii. present: 'dzad ၎ေဒ decline, be spent  
other: zad ဒဒ
- iii. present: 'dzed ၎ေဒ put out  
other: gzed, 'bzed ဃဒေ ဂဒေ
- iv. present: 'dzur ၎ေဒ make way  
other: bzur gzur, zur ဃဒဒ; ဂဒဒ, ဒဒ

In the case of one of these verbs the alternation of 'dz-with z- is in the present form itself: 'dzugs and zug ( ဂဒုဂဃ, ဒုဂ ) 'plant'; this same verb; and two others, alternate with forms in *bts-* in the perfect: *btsugs*, *zugs* ဃဒုဂဃ, ဒုဂဃ 'plant', *btsud*, *zud* ဃဒုဒ, ဒုဒ 'put into', *btsun*, *zun* ဃဒုဒ, ဒုဒ 'shut'; and the two last also alternate with *tsh-* in the imperative: *tshud*, *tshun* ( ဒုဒ, ဒုဒ ). There is, in addition, another form, apparently not a verb, in which 'dz- alternates with gz-: 'dzings, gzing ၎ေဒဃ, ဂဒေ 'bristly'.

At the time when the orthography was devised, I take 'dz- ၎ေ- to have had the phonetic value of a nasal followed by an affricate, with the nasal having the same tongue position as the affricate ([ndz-]);<sup>8</sup> thus, both sounds have in common the feature of complete closure in the mouth by the tongue. I take z- ဒ-, on the other hand, whether alone, as z-, or in the initial groups gz- and bz- ( ဂဒ-, ဃဒ- ), to have had the value of a fricative ([z]), and therefore no closure in the mouth.<sup>9</sup> From a comparison of the nasal-and-affricate group [ndz] with the fricative ([z]) or groups containing the fricative [z], I conclude

that the non-nasal closure [d] of the [ndz-] group is a *vyañjanabhakti*, a glide, sharing the closure feature with the preceding nasal ([n]) and the non-nasality feature with the following fricative ([z]), i.e. [n(d)z-]:

closure                  non-nasality  
[n----d-----z]

Accordingly, I should have preferred to see initial 'dz- འཛེ-, which is a *vyañjanabhakti* spelling, replaced, at least for the nine verbs with alternating forms in 'dz- and (g/b)z-, by \*'z- \*འཛ-, with the result that, for example, 'dzag and 'dzin ( འཛེག, འཛེན,) would be spelt \*'zag and \*'zin ( \*འཇག, \*འཇན ), and that their initial letters would cease to alternate. Their forms would then appear as follows:

*'zag	(g)zags	gzag;	*'zin	(b)zung	gzung	zung(s)
*འཇག	(ག)ཇགས	གཇག ;	*འཇན	(ན)ཇར	གཇར	ཇར (ས)

In my analysis I have attributed a nasal-and-affricate value to the initial group 'dz- འཛེ-; but I am obliged to admit that, whatever the pronunciation may have been at the time when the spelling became established, my Research Assistant Rinzin Wangpo (*rig- 'dzin dbang- po*), a well-educated speaker from Lhasa, regularly pronounced this initial group of letters when spelling and reading not as a sequence of nasal and affricate ([ndz-]) but as a sequence of nasal and fricative ([nz-]), e.g. 'dzin not as \*[ndzin] but as [ndzin], without a *vyañjanabhakti*. This pronunciation conflicts with the interpretation of the orthography that I gave at the beginning of this paragraph, and is therefore, at first sight, something of an embarrassment to me; but I take it to be an alternative pronunciation without *vyañjanabhakti*, and therefore as supporting my interpretation of orthographic 'dz- འཛེ- as the *vyañjanabhakti* form of what is to be regarded structurally as \*'z- \*འཛ-. For such an interpretation I am obliged to assume that z- འཛ- was pronounced in former times as a voiced consonant ([z-]); but this assumption presents no great difficulty, for the z- of the orthography corresponds to the voiced consonant [z-] of the more conservative Tibetan dialects; e.g. *zam-pa* 'bridge', *zangs* 'copper', Balti [z-]; *za* 'eat', 'gza' planet', Golok [z-] (in the Lhasa dialect and in the pronunciation used in spelling and reading written Tibetan z- corresponds to the voiceless consonant [s-] in a low-tone syllable).<sup>10</sup>

Rinzing Wangpo's pronunciation of initial 'dz- འཛེ- not as [ndz-] but as [nz-] in reading and spelling written Tibetan does not



go un-supported: the Lhasa dialect has [-nz-] corresponding to the 'dz-' of the spelling, though only in certain types of syllable junction within the word, e.g. *zla-* 'dzin' 'eclipse', *zal-* 'dzum' 'smile', *skas-* 'dzeg' 'ladder' ( རྩ་འཛིན་, རྩ་འཛུམ་, སྐལ་འཛིན་ ); so too does Golok, but with the difference that in Golok the [nz] features are not confined to a medial position but occur initially in such words as *mdzub-mo* (or *'dzub-mo*) 'finger', *'dzom* 'assemble', and (') *dzam-gling* 'world'.<sup>11</sup> Consistently with this nasal-and-fricative pronunciation corresponding to 'dz-འཛི- Golok has a nasal-and-fricative pronunciation [mz-], not nasal-and-affricate (\*[mdz-]), corresponding to the initial group *mdz-*འཛི- of the spelling; e.g. [mz-] *mdzo* འཛི་ 'yak' (hybrid).

It may be that syllables spelt with 'dz- འཛི- (and *mdz-*འཛི-) fluctuate in pronunciation from [nz-] to [ndz-] (and [mz-] to [mdz-]) from speaker to speaker, and have done so since the early days of the orthography, in something like the way in which English words ending in *-nch* such as *lunch*, *branch*, and *finch* fluctuate between a *vyañjanabhakti* pronunciation with nasal and affricate ([*-ntsʃ*]) and a pronunciation with nasal and fricative ([*-nʃ*]), as though spelt \**lunsh*, \**bransh*, etc.

Whatever the likelihood of a fluctuation in the pronunciation of 'dz-འཛི- between nasal and affricate and nasal and fricative, it is evident that adopting an alphabetic scheme of the Sanskrit type, the *varna samāmnāya*, for Tibetan has had the effect of widely separating the affricate [dz] from the fricative [z]; for *dza* འ in that scheme is grouped with *tša* and *tsha* (ཨ, ཨ་), and separated from *za* ག, which is grouped with *ža*, *ja*, and *ya* (ཁ, ཁ་, ལ). As I hope I have been able to show, the morphology of the verbs considered in this section (a) requires them at least to be closely associated, or, preferably, unified through the representation of 'dz- འཛི as \**z-* འ and \**dz-* འཛི.

The same sort of symbolization could be extended to forms currently written with initial groups *mdz-*འཛི and *rdz-*རྩི, e.g. *mdzad* 'do', *mdza* 'love', *rdzi* 'press', *rdzogs* 'be finished' (འཛིའཛི, འཛིའཛི, རྩི, རྩིགས་) which would then be spelt \**mzad*, *mza*, *rzi*, and *rzogs* (\*འཛིའཛི, འཛིའཛི, རྩི, རྩིགས་). I am not, however, able to advocate this change of symbolization on the same grounds as for 'dz- and (g/b)z-, because verbs with initial *mdz-* and *rdz-* do not show any alternation in form as between *mdz-* or *rdz-* and (g/b) z-; on the contrary, verbs with initial *mdz-* or *rdz-* in one form are spelt with that same initial group in all forms. The only reasons, then, for making a parallel change from *mdz-* and *rdz-* to \**mz-*

and \*rz- respectively are those of consistency with the proposed change from 'dz- to \*z-, and economy; for it would then be very nearly possible to dispense with the letter dz- altogether: words spelt with the single initial letter dz- number, in Jäschke's *Dictionary*, only nineteen. They alone would remain.

Although the initial group rdz- ར་འ - occurs in Tibetan orthography, and is by no means rare, and although both rdz'- and ldz'- (ར་འ, ལ་འ) occur (section (b)), e.g. rdzed 'forget', ldzongs 'valley', 'region' (ར་འ, ལ་འ), there is no such initial group of letters as \*ldz- \*ལ་འ-. A corresponding initial sound group to this non-existent group of letters, [ldz-], does, however, occur in the Balti dialect; it corresponds to the existing initial group of letters zl- ལ་འ; e.g. [ldza:] zla-ba 'month', [ldzoq] zlog 'cause to return'. This Balti initial sound group I should analyse exactly as for \*[ndz-], in terms of *vyañjanabhakti*, the closure [d] being related to the partial closure of the preceding [l]. The appropriate spelling for this sound group would, therefore, be not the *vyañjanabhakm* spelling \*ldz-ལ་འ- but \*lz-ལ་འ-. The above two Balti examples would, accordingly, be spelt \*lza-ba ལ་འ་བ་ (better, perhaps, ལ་འ་(ལ་-ལ་), and ལ་འ་ལ་.

Since, however, the corresponding spelling to this Balti initial sound group is not \*lz-ལ་འ- but zl-ལ་འ-, the Balti sound group has generally been treated as an example of metathesis, a reversal of what is taken, on the basis of the spelling order, to have been earlier \*[zl-].<sup>12</sup> The spelling order zl- is itself, though, anomalous, and hardly a satisfactory basis for the postulated metathesis: while there is indeed an initial group sl-ས་འ-, which therefore contrasts with zl-ལ་འ-, nowhere else in Tibetan orthography is there a corresponding contrast. The letter s is comprised in the initial groups sp-, sb-, sts-, sm-, sn-, sr-, etc. (ས་འ, ས་འ, ས་འ, ས་འ, ས་འ, ས་འ), e.g. spun, sbom, stsol, sman, sna, sras, ས་འ་, ས་འ་, ས་འ་, ས་འ་, ས་འ་, ས་འ་; but there are no corresponding, and contrasting, initial groups \*zp-, zb-, zts-, zm-, zn- zr-, \*ལ་འ-, ལ་འ-, ལ་འ-, ལ་འ-, ལ་འ-, ལ་འ-. The initial group zl- is, clearly, without parallel in Tibetan orthography; it is not, therefore, surprising that in none of the spoken dialects is there a corresponding pronunciation \*[zl-] (or, with *vyañjanabhakti*, \*[zdl-]). The word-initial features corresponding to zl- in the Balti, Golok, and Lhasa dialects, and in the reading and spelling styles of pronouncing written Tibetan are:

Balti	Golok	Lhasa	Reading-style
[ldz-	rdz-	d- (low tone)	nd- (low tone)].

There are two explanations that occur to me for what is, orthographically speaking, a freak. They are (i) that *zl-* might have been adopted as a digraph to symbolize some such initial sound group as [ldz-], as in the corresponding forms in Balti, a remarkably conservative dialect, and that, accordingly, *zl-* was regarded as a single pronunciation unit, like the Greek letters *zēta* (for [dz-] or [zd-]) and *psi* (for [ps-]), and not as a succession of the two units *z* and *l* in that order;<sup>13</sup> or (ii) that *zl-* represents an early compromise symbolization of widely different pronunciation features from different dialects, as in the current phonetic diversity of the Balti and other forms given above, and was therefore intended at the outset to symbolize more than one pronunciation, in much the same way as the *Oxford English Dictionary* uses a special phonetic symbol to indicate that such words as *grass*, *path*, and *castle* are pronounced by North-country speakers with a short vowel, the same vowel as in *lass*, but by other speakers with a long vowel, the same vowel as in *guard*.

The same explanation might also stand for the corresponding voiceless Balti initial group [hlts-] ([hl] is here used as a digraph for a single sound, a voiceless lateral), as including a *vyañjanabhakti* [t], where this sound group corresponds to the spelling *sl-* སྣ- (cf. *zl-* འ-), e.g. *slob*/*bslabs* སྣབ་/བསྣབ་ 'teach', *slang* སྣང་ 'raise', *sleb* སྣབ་ 'reach'.<sup>14</sup> I should then wish to treat these and other examples of *sl-* སྣ- as better spelt with \**ls-* \*ལས-, e.g. \**lsab*, \**lsang*, \**lseb* (ལསབ་, ལསང་, ལསབ་). Although at first sight \**lts-* \*ལཱས- might seem a more appropriate symbolization of such forms as these, especially since *lts-* ལཱས- occurs in the orthography as an initial group, e. g. *ltsags* ལཱས་གས་ 'iron', for which the corresponding Balti initial is [hlts-], a close parallel to [hlts-], the proposed initial group \**ls-* \*ལས- avoids symbolizing the *vyañjanabhakti* [t] and therefore seems to me to be preferable (cf. the corresponding analysis of 'tsh- འཇ- as 's- འས- in section (d)).

b. 'dz'- alternating with z', gz', and bz'-

འཇ-                      ,,                      འ-                      འག-                      འབ-

A detailed account of the relations of 'dz- and rdz- (འཇ-, འར-) (and a potential \*ldz-?) with z-, gz-, and bz- (ཇ-, གཇ-, བཇ-) has been given in order that it shall serve as a model for corresponding alternations in sections (b)- (e); these sections are, in consequence, somewhat less detailed.

Jäschke gives fourteen verbs as showing an alternation in spelling between a present form in 'dz'- འཇ- and some other form, past,

future, or imperative, with initial  $\acute{z}$ - or containing  $\acute{z}$ - in an initial group  $g\acute{z}$ - or  $b\acute{z}$ - ( $\text{ཁཱ་ཁ་}$ ,  $\text{བཁཱ་}$ ); e.g.

- |      |          |   |                                 |             |
|------|----------|---|---------------------------------|-------------|
| i.   | present: | $\acute{d}zag$  | $\text{འཇག་}$                   | establish   |
|      | other:   | $\acute{z}ags$  | $\text{ཁཱམ་}$                   |             |
| ii.  | present: | $\acute{d}\acute{z}o$ (imp. $\acute{d}\acute{z}os$ )  | $\text{འཇ་}$ ( $\text{འཇམ་}$ )  | milk        |
|      | other:   | $\acute{b}\acute{z}o$                                 | $\text{བཞ་}$                    |             |
| iii. | present: | $\acute{d}\acute{z}al$ (imp. $\acute{d}\acute{z}ol$ ) | $\text{འཇལ་}$ ( $\text{འཇལ་}$ ) | weigh, etc. |
|      | other:   | $g\acute{z}al$  | $\text{ཁཱལ་}$                   |             |
| iv.  | present: | $\acute{d}\acute{z}ig$                                | $\text{འཇིག་}$                  | destroy     |
|      | other:   | $b\acute{z}ig, g\acute{z}ig$                          | $\text{བཞིག་, ཁཱིག་}$           |             |
| v.   | present: | $\acute{d}\acute{z}og$                                | $\text{འཇོག་}$                  | put         |
|      | other:   | $b\acute{z}ag, g\acute{z}ag, \acute{z}og$             | $\text{བཞག་, ཁཱག་, ཞོག་}$       |             |

For some of their forms others of the fourteen verbs go outside the four types of initial considered here,  $\acute{d}z$ -,  $\acute{z}$ -,  $b\acute{z}$ -, and  $g\acute{z}$ -, and have forms in  $b\acute{t}\acute{s}$ -,  $t\acute{s}h$ -, and  $(b)\acute{s}$ - ( $\text{བཅ་}$ -,  $\text{ཅ་}$ -,  $(\text{བ་})\text{ཅ་}$ ). Six have a perfect form in  $b\acute{t}\acute{s}$ -, three have imperatives in  $t\acute{s}h$ -, and one has an imperative in  $(b)\acute{s}$ -. All of these spellings except  $(b)\acute{s}$ - suggest affricate initials for these ten forms, either as simple sounds or as part of a group; but I shall restrict myself here to the spelling alternations exemplified at (i) - (v) above, and their phonetic implications. I might add to them a noun that shows the same type of alternation:  $\acute{d}\acute{z}or/g\acute{z}or$   $\text{འཇོར་/ཁཱོར་}$  'hoe'.

I take  $\acute{d}z$ -  $\text{འཇ་}$ - to represent a homorganic nasal-and-affricate group, just as I did in the case of  $\acute{d}z$ -  $\text{འཇ་}$ -; but I am on firmer phonetic ground here, for that is the invariable pronunciation of this initial group in the current spelling-style and reading-style pronunciations; e.g.  $\acute{d}\acute{z}am$   $\text{འཇམ་}$  [ $\acute{n}\acute{d}z$ -] 'soft'.<sup>14</sup> I have never observed an alternative sequence comprising homorganic nasal and fricative ( $*[\acute{n}z$ -]) for initial  $\acute{d}z$ - (but compare section (a),  $\acute{d}z$ -), though such a sequence would not be un-welcome.

Initial  $\acute{z}$ -  $\text{ཁ་}$ - I interpret as fricative, whether single or grouped, in  $b\acute{z}$ - and  $g\acute{z}$ - ( $\text{བཞ་}$ -,  $\text{ཁཱ་}$ -); and, as in the case of  $z$ -  $\text{མ་}$ - in section (a), I take it to have been formerly voiced. Whether simple or prefixed its current pronunciation in spelling and in reading is with voicelessness ( $[\acute{s}]$ ), in low-tone syllables; but voicing ( $[\acute{z}]$ ), in former times, is supported by  $[\acute{z}]$  in the Skardu dialect of Balti in such words as  $\acute{z}u$  'request',

zing 'field', and zón 'mount', and by Sikkimese too, though only where the corresponding spelling is a group, gź- or bź- (གཙ- བཙ-).<sup>15</sup>

I analyse the 'dz'-འཛ- initials as containing a *vyañjanabhakti*. My grounds for doing so are the same as they were for the 'dz'-འཛ- initial group of section (a): the *vyañjanabhakti* [-d-] of the initial group [ñdz-] shares a lingual, or tongue, closure feature with the preceding nasal sound ([ñ-]) and non-nasality with the following fricative ([-z-]).

It seems to me unlikely, therefore, that I could have been Thonmi Sambhota in a previous incarnation; for, if I had had his opportunity of pioneering the Tibetan spelling, I should have wanted to spell the initials of the present forms of the verb shown at the beginning of this section not as 'dz'-འཛ- but as \*'z'-འཙ-. The verbs shown there at (i) and (iv), for example, would then be regularized in spelling, as far as initial consonant symbols are concerned, though not the vowel symbols of the second example, as:

*'zág ;	zags	*zóg	bzág	gzág	zóg
*འཙག་ ;	འཙག་	*འཙོག་	བཙག་	གཙག་	ཙོག་

If, then, I had been Thonmi Sambhota, I should certainly have considered instituting the spellings that I have illustrated in these two examples for all the fourteen similar verbs given by Jäschke, and might well have applied it generally to all syllables, whether noun, verb, adjective, or particle, that are at present spelt with 'dz'-འཛ-. In that case 'dz'-འཛ- would never, of course, have appeared in Tibetan writing at all; for all syllables now spelt with this initial group of letters would have been spelt \*'z'- from the outset.

Again assuming that I were Thonmi Sambhota, with a free hand to follow my feeling for the pronunciation and grammar of Tibetan wherever it might lead me, I might have gone further, and symbolized all words that at present have initial *mdź-*, *rdź-*, or *ldź-* (མཛེ-ཇེ-, ལཛེ-) as *mź-*, *rź-*, or *lǝź-* respectively (མཛེ-, རཛེ-, ལཛེ-), though here again, as I stated for *mdz-* and *rdz-* (མཛེ-, ཇེ-) in section (a) above, there are no grammatical grounds that require this. That is to say, there is no alternation of symbols in grammatically different forms of the same verb in their case; and the only argument for treating them in this way is that of identifying the [-d-] features of the initial groups \*[mdź-], [rdź-], and [ldź-] as *vyañjanabhakti*, and symbolizing such syllables as, for example, *mdžal* 'meet', *rdže* 'barter', and *ldžid* 'weight'

as \*mzal, \*rže, and \*l'zid (མཐལ, རེ, ལའིད).<sup>16</sup> If I had taken this course, there would no longer be any syllables spelt with the initial groups mdz-, dz-, rdz-, and ldz-, but only those now spelt with the single initial letter dz-ཇ-; e.g. dza ཇ 'tea', dzo-bo ཇ་བོ 'elder brother', dzag-pa ཇག་པ་ 'robber'.

- c. 'tsh- alternating with s-, gs-, and (b)s-  
འཇ- ,, ,, མ-, གམ-, and (བ)མ-

Jäschke gives only two verbs as alternating an initial group 'tsh-འཇ- for the present form with the single initial s-མ-, or the groups bs- and gs- (བམ-, གམ-) that contain it, in other forms:

- |      |                           |                   |         |
|------|---------------------------|-------------------|---------|
| i.   | present: 'tshab           | འཇམ་              | repay   |
|      | other: tshabs/bsabs, bsab | ཇམ་མ་/བམམམ་, བམམ་ |         |
| ii.  | present: 'tsho            | འཇ་               | live    |
|      | other: sos                | མ་མ་              |         |
| iii. | present: 'tsho            | འཇ་               | nourish |
|      | other: (b)sos, gso        | (བ)མ་མ་, གམ་      |         |

I take 'tsh-འཇ- to represent a sound group comprising homorganic nasal and affricate of the same type as dz-ཇ- considered in section (a), except that where 'dz- symbolized voice and non-aspiration tsh- symbolized voicelessness and aspiration. My only support for this assumption comes from the second syllable of Golok [hrtantsho] 'horses', corresponding to rta-tsho, though a spelling 'tsho would, in my opinion, be more appropriate than tsho; nasality ([n]) is an initial feature of this syllable not only in Golok but also, medially, in such a different dialect as the Lhasa; e.g. [-nzu] in nga-tsho 'we' 'brug-pa-tsho 'the Bhutanese'. The pronunciation of s-མ- as [s-] is not controversial; the spelling-style pronunciation of sa མ 'ground', for example, is [sa], and that of gsum གམམ 'three' is [sum] (Balti. and Golok [xsum]).

The reader, by now familiar with my *vyāñjanabhakti* approach to alternation in the initial groups of symbols in the verb, will not be surprised to find that I analyse the initial 'tsh-འཇ- as including a *vyāñjanabhakti* [-t-], whence the *t* of the initial group of symbols 'tsh-, which I should therefore interpret as \*'s- \*འམ-.

The aspiration feature ([h]) of the initial sound group [ntsh-], symbolized by the *h* component of the group of symbols *tsh-*, co-occurs with the nasality, and is therefore in a close relationship with it; being

automatic, it presents no difficulty to my analysis: if nasality, then also aspiration (the converse does not quite hold, because of the alternative form *tshabs* at (i)). This related nasality is, in the case of *tsh-*, homorganic (cf. also sections (a) and (b)); but it is worth remarking in passing that an initial group *mtsh*-<sup>ᵐᵗᶢ</sup> also occurs, and that the nasality in such groups is non-homorganic and labial ([*mtsh*-]). Such a pronunciation is supported by the Golok [*mtsho*] 'lake' *mtsho* ᵐᵗᶢᵒ.

The case for analysing the initial group *mtsh*-<sup>ᵐᵗᶢ</sup> as incorporating a *vyañjanabhakti* [-t-], and therefore for treating it as *\*ms-* <sup>ᵐᵗᶢᵐᵗᶢ</sup>, is precisely the same as the case presented in sections (a) and (b) for treating *mdž*-<sup>ᵐᵈᶜ</sup> and *mdž*-<sup>ᵐᵈᶜᵐᵈᶜ</sup> (and *rdz-*, *rdž-*, and *ldž-*; <sup>ᵐᵈᶜ</sup>-, <sup>ᵐᵈᶜ</sup>-, <sup>ᵐᵈᶜᵐᵈᶜ</sup>-) as *vyañjanabhakti* variants of *\*mz-* and *\*mž-* (<sup>ᵐᵈᶜ</sup> <sup>ᵐᵈᶜᵐᵈᶜ</sup>, <sup>ᵐᵈᶜᵐᵈᶜ</sup> <sup>ᵐᵈᶜᵐᵈᶜᵐᵈᶜ</sup>), except that in their case it is not aspiration but non-aspiration that automatically accompanies the nasality.

Given the *vyañjanabhakti* type of analysis, then, verbs (i) and (iii) of this section, for example, could be regularized as:

\*'sab *tshabs/bsabs bsab*; \*<sup>ᵐᵗᶢ</sup>so (b)sos *gs*.

\*ᵐᵗᶢᵐᵗᶢ ᵐᵗᶢᵐᵗᶢ/ᵐᵗᶢᵐᵗᶢ ᵐᵗᶢᵐᵗᶢ; \*ᵐᵗᶢᵐᵗᶢ (ᵐᵗᶢ)ᵐᵗᶢᵐᵗᶢ ᵐᵗᶢᵐᵗᶢ

d. *'tsh-* alternating with *s-* and *bs-*

<sup>ᵐᵗᶢᵐᵗᶢ</sup> ,, ,, <sup>ᵐᵗᶢᵐᵗᶢ</sup> <sup>ᵐᵗᶢᵐᵗᶢ</sup>-and <sup>ᵐᵗᶢᵐᵗᶢ</sup>

Jäschke gives five verbs in which a present form in *'tsh*-<sup>ᵐᵗᶢᵐᵗᶢ</sup> alternates with forms in *s-* and *bs-* (<sup>ᵐᵗᶢᵐᵗᶢ</sup>-, <sup>ᵐᵗᶢᵐᵗᶢ</sup>); e.g.

i. 'present: *'tshar* <sup>ᵐᵗᶢᵐᵗᶢ</sup> rise

other: *sar* <sup>ᵐᵗᶢᵐᵗᶢ</sup>

ii. present: *'tshad* <sup>ᵐᵗᶢᵐᵗᶢ</sup> explain

other: *bsad, sod* <sup>ᵐᵗᶢᵐᵗᶢ</sup>, <sup>ᵐᵗᶢᵐᵗᶢ</sup>

There is also a verb in which *'tsh*-<sup>ᵐᵗᶢᵐᵗᶢ</sup> alternates not with *s-* (<sup>ᵐᵗᶢᵐᵗᶢ</sup> and *bs-*<sup>ᵐᵗᶢᵐᵗᶢ</sup>) but with *bts-* and *gž-* (<sup>ᵐᵗᶢᵐᵗᶢ</sup>-, <sup>ᵐᵗᶢᵐᵗᶢ</sup>), though Jäschke queries the latter:

present: *'tshol* <sup>ᵐᵗᶢᵐᵗᶢ</sup> entrust

other: *btsol, gžol* '(?)' <sup>ᵐᵗᶢᵐᵗᶢ</sup>, <sup>ᵐᵗᶢᵐᵗᶢ</sup>

I have no wish to repeat *ad nauseam* the details of my approach to this problem of variation in the initial letter groups of different forms of verbs, and will content myself here with stating that the *'tsh-* and (b)*s-* alternation (<sup>ᵐᵗᶢᵐᵗᶢ</sup>-, (ᵐᵗᶢ)ᵐᵗᶢ-) is parallel to that of *'tsh-* and *s-* (section (c)), even to the alternation of aspiration (*'tsh*-<sup>ᵐᵗᶢᵐᵗᶢ</sup>) in the present form with non-aspiration ((b)*s-*(ᵐᵗᶢ)ᵐᵗᶢ-) in the other forms, the aspiration feature being bound to nasality here too. I therefore take





	present	perfect	present	perfect		
ii.	'dral	dral	འདྲལ་	དྲལ་	tear	trans.
	ral		རལ་		be torn	intrans.
iii.	'dre	'dres	འདྲེ	འདྲེས་	be mixed	intrans.
	sre	bsres	སྟེ	བསྟེས་	mix	trans.

Such other words, apart from pairs of verbs, as 'dril འདྲིལ་ 'roll' (intrans.) and ril-ba རིལ་བ་ 'round', also support a relationship between 'dr- and r-, (འདྲ-, ར-).

If this small list of forms in section (e) seems sufficient to warrant it, initial 'dr- འདྲ-, when associable with r- ར-, could again be treated as incorporating a *vyāñjanabhakti*, and therefore structurally equivalent to \*'r- \*ʔʀ-; the verb forms in (ii) and (iii) above would then appear as:

ii. trans. \*'ral \*ʔʀལ་; intrans. ral རལ་

iii. intrans. \*'re(s) འདྲེས་(ས་); trans. (b)sre(s) (བ)སྟེ(ས་);

and 'dril would appear as \*ʔril (འདྲིལ་, \*ʔʀལ་).

These examples complete the exercise in which I have usurped the role of Thonmi Sambhota, and considered how greater attention to grammar, balanced by less attention to phonetic features, might have removed at least some irregularities from the thirty-three Tibetan verbs studied here.

#### Notes

1. W.S.Allen cites four different accounts of *svārabhakti* from Sanskrit sources (*Phonetics in ancient India, a guide to the appreciation of the earliest phoneticians*, Oxford University Press, 1953, pp. 73-4, 80.
2. George Calder, *A Gaelic grammar*, Glasgow, 1923, p. 70.
3. Symbols in square brackets are in the International Phonetic Alphabet, but with certain modifications that

make for easier printing: these modifications are:

[tʃ]:	voiceless alveolo-palatal affricate
[ʃ]:	" " " fricative
[ʒ]:	voiced " " " "
[dʒ]:	" " " affricate
[hl]:	voiceless alveolar lateral
[hr]:	" " " rolled
[ñ]:	(voiced) palatal nasal

(in the English examples [tʃ] and [ʃ] have not alveolo-palatal but palato-alveolar values).

4. Robert Shafer, 'Studies in the morphology of Bodic verbs', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, XIII, 3 (1950), p. 702.

5. Shafer, *id.*, pp. 702, 704. I have re-Romanized Shafer's Tibetan examples in the following respects in order to have a uniform system of Romanization throughout this article: *ts'*-, *ts'*-, *ṣ-* to *tsh-*, *tsh-*, and *'-* respectively (*ṣ-*, *ṣ-*, *ṣ-*).

6. For Tibetan orthographic forms I have followed H.A. Jäschke, *A Tibetan-English dictionary*, London, 1934.

7. R.K. Sprigg, 'A tibeti mássalhangzókapsolatok fonetikai problémái', *Magyar Tudományos Akadémia I. Oszt. Közl.*, 25, 1968, pp. 161-7 (trans. A. Rona-Tas), the text of a paper read before the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest in May, 1967, on which occasion I learnt that the analysis I have proposed in the present article had also occurred to, and had the support of, G. Uray, author of 'Kelet-Tibet' nyelvjárásainak osztályozása', *Dissertationes Sodalium Instituti Asiae Interioris* 4, Budapest, 1949.

For the reason given in note 5, uniformity of symbolization, and also to emphasize the relationship between certain Tibetan initial letters that is essential to my argument, I have here re-Romanized the examples given there out of the Hungarian system of Romanization as follows: for Hungarian *j-*, *j̃-*, and *ž-* respectively, *dz-*, *dž-*, and *ž-* (*ḑ-*, *ḑ-*, *ḑ-*).

8. Such an interpretation is supported, as far as the homorganic nasal is concerned, by the Golok and the Lhasa dialects of spoken Tibetan (R.K. Sprigg, 'The role of R in the development of the modern spoken Tibetan dialects', *Acta Orientalia Hungarica*, XXI, 3 (1968), pp. 310-11) as well as that of the spelling-style pronunciation of written Tibetan, examples of which are given later in this section.

9. Such an interpretation has the support of the Balti, Sikkimese, and Golok dialects: e.g. *za* 'eat', Balti and Golok [z-]; *bzang-ba* 'good', Balti [bz-]; *spyen-ras gzigs* 'Avalokiteśvara', Golok [(g)z-] Sikkimese [z-].

10. In this respect the Sikkimese dialect forms something of a bridge between the more conservative Balti and Golok dialects and the less conservative Lhasa dialect: it has both [z-] and [s-] in low-tone syllables, the former corresponding to the initial groups *gz-* and *bz-*, and the latter to the single initial letter *z-*; e.g. [z-] in *gzim* 'sleep', *bzo* 'make'; [s-] in *zam-pa* 'bridge', *zangs* 'copper', *za* 'eat'.

11. See also 'The role of R', p. 311. My research assistant for Golok, Dodrup Rimpoche, of the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, preferred the spelling 'dzub-mo' to Jäschke's *mdzub-mo*;

and his pronunciation of this word, with initial [nz-] rather than [mz-], which occurs in Golok (cf. *mdzo* later in this paragraph), supports his preference.

12. Shafer, *op. cit.*, p. 711: 'the common Sbaliti inversion of spirants and affricates in combination with l'
13. On the pronunciation of the Greek letters see W.S. Allen, *Vox Graeca*, Cambridge University Press, 1968, pp. 53-7
14. For examples from the spoken dialects Golok and Lhasa that support this conjecture see 'The role of R', p. 311
15. Cf. note 10; Sikkimese [ʒ] in *bʒag* 'put', *bʒugs* 'sit', but [s-] in *ʒu* 'request', *ʒon* 'ride'.
16. I have asterisked [mdʒ-] as being conjectural only, this is because, in spite of the occurrence of *mdʒ* in spelling,

I have never in fact observed an initial sound group such as this in any dialect; the only relevant example in my Golok material is *mdʒal* 'meet', pronounced not with labial nasality ([\*mdʒ-]) but with homorganic nasality ([ndʒ-]). The other two examples here, though, are supported by Golok [rdʒe:] and Balti [ldʒit], in each of which I take the [-d-] to be *vyāñjanabhakti*.

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